Today's News - Wednesday, March 11, 2009

- Heathcote's thoughtful take on whether the recession might be bad for architects but good for architecture (with caveats).
- One reason for the sad state of architects in Iceland: years of unchecked development (everyone should have known better).
- Hume cheers a new report: "design a city that works for the young is to design a city that works for everyone."
- London mayor launches Great Spaces initiative that will transform some less well known streets, parks and riverside walks.
- Hosey thinks architects need to get out more: "How can we embrace nature when we rarely encounter it?"
- British Columbia is considering a radical new plan for housing the homeless - devised by a Vancouver architect 40 years ago.
- Another Vancouver architect launches a factory for prefab homes.
- An impressive shortlist for the new Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta.
- Alice Tully Hall revamp is a model for Philadelphia's Kimmel Center make-over: make it a building that says come in and stay awhile.
- King cheers plans to turn San Francisco's Metreon complex inside out, taking a cue from Urbanism 101 and plugging the "metal crate" back into the neighborhood.
- Chipperfield's Neues Museum may set new standards for reusing war-damaged buildings.
- Kamin waxes poetic about a mattress company's new HQ that "makes visual poetry out of the prosaic stuff of everyday life" (and pix to prove it).
- Hume gives three thumbs-up's to University of Waterloo Pharmacy Building: it's "an urban catalyst, an economic generator, and a civic icon."
- An eyeful of R House, one of Syracuse U.'s From the Ground Up competition winners - the first in the U.S. to meet Passivhaus standards.
- Rogers' Lloyd's of London building denied landmark listing - some say it's in danger, others disagree (great slide show, too).
- Levete gets into details about working - and living - with Kaplicky: "My greatest regret is that I didn't make peace with him in life."

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Chance to pause for thought: ...could we say that, although bad for architects, a recession may nevertheless be good for architecture? There are signs that the UK government is following the US example and gearing up to back public projects, although they seem spectacularly to lack vision...the consequences of 1929 remain a sobering rebuttal... By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times (UK)

After the Gold Rush: In bankrupt Iceland, architects contend with years of unchecked development...As of February 1...an estimated 90% of Icelandic architects became unemployed...architects themselves, as well as developers and city planners, should have known better. -- Guja Dögg; Olafur Mathiesen; Glama/Kim; Sigrun Birgisdottir; Bjorn Martensen; Mads Bay Moller/KRADS- The Architect's Newspaper

How to build a better city: It's child's play: "A Call to Action," released recently by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), argues that to design a city that works for the young is to design a city that works for everyone. By Christopher Hume -- Enrique Peñalosa; Richard Gilbert; Catherine O'Brien- Toronto Star

London mayor announces new public spaces plan: Great Spaces initiative will replace Livingstone's 100 Public Spaces...billed as championing existing public spaces that are unattractive or have poor access, to transform some of the city's less well known streets, parks and riverside walks. -- Terry Farrell; Richard Rogers- BD/Building Design (UK)

Eco: Into the Wild: Outdoor education should be essential to architectural training: Ironically, many of us working to protect the environment...spend more time in conference rooms than in fields and forests...How can we embrace nature when we rarely encounter it? By Lance Hosey- Architect Magazine

Architect's 40-year dream to house homeless: The B.C. provincial government is considering a radical new plan for housing the homeless -- modular units that can be stacked on vacant land...With over 2,000 homeless people on the streets of Greater Vancouver, many say that a solution is urgently needed. -- Michael Geller [image]- CTV (Canada)

Architect, partners launch plant to prefabricate homes: Designs adopt 'Japanese minimalism' and 'New York-style loft' to recreational or infill property purposes -- Tony Robins/AA Robins Architects; Preform Construction- Vancouver Sun

Five Vie for Civil Rights: Finalists announced for new Center for Civil and Human Rights museum and justice center in Atlanta -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro/Stanley Beaman & Sears; Freelon Group/HOK; Huff + Gooden/Hammel Green and Abrahamson (HGA); Moody•Nolan/Antoine Predock/Goode Van Slyke of Atlanta; Polshek Partnership/Cooper Carry/Stanley Love-Stanley [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Alice Tully: A model for Kimmel to follow: If the Kimmel is going to lure visitors from Broad Street, it will have to become more permeable..a building that says two more things: In bricks and mortar, that's "Please stay." And in acoustics...it's "Come back soon." -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro/FXFOWLE Architects; KieranTimberlake- Philadelphia Inquirer

Metreon overhaul will embrace its surroundings: If ever a 10-year-old needed a face-lift, it's the Metreon complex in San Francisco, a metal crate the owners now plan to turn inside out, and not a moment too soon...before we bid adieu...take stock of the lesson it teaches cities everywhere: In the long run, hermetically sealed shopping malls are no match for real-life urbanity. By John King [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Egyptian Beauty Nefertiti Will Move to Stylish New Berlin Home: War-damaged buildings are something Berlin city planners have had plenty of experience with...David Chipperfield has found an alternative with the Neues Museum...may set new standards for such projects and prompt soul searching about historical reproductions, such as that planned for the nearby Baroque royal palace.- Bloomberg News

The best new office building in Chicago's suburbs: Lighter-than-air Serta headquarters floats above the landscape...a quiet beauty...makes visual poetry...out of the prosaic stuff of everyday life. By Blair Kamin -- Epstein (A. Epstein and Sons); Jacobs/Ryan Associates Landscape Architects [images, slide show]- Chicago Tribune

A building with brains - and good looks: When it works, a building is more than a building; it can be an urban catalyst, an economic generator and a civic icon. There's no better example of all three than the new University of Waterloo Pharmacy Building. By Christopher Hume -- Hariri Pontarini Architects; Young + Wright Architects- Toronto Star

R House: Winner of From the Ground Up Innovative Green Homes Competition: ...will be built later this year, with a total budget of just $150,000...meeting the German Passivhaus standards for extra-low energy consumption, once finished, this house will be of the first of its kind to be built in the US. -- Architecture Research Office (ARO); Della Valle Bernheimer [slide show, links]- Wallpaper*

Lloyd's of London building denied listed status: ...neither old enough nor sufficiently under threat to warrant heritage protection. The news has 'shocked' the Twentieth Century Society (C20)... -- Richard Rogers (1986) [slide show]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

'My greatest regret is that I didn't make peace with him in life': Amanda Levete talks for the first time about her split from her husband architect Jan Kaplicky -- Future Systems - Telegraph (UK)

GRAFT Architects: Dental Clinic KU64 and Kinderdentist, Berlin, Germany

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